

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH SCOTT MCGAUGH, MARKETING  
DIRECTOR, USS MIDWAY; AUTHOR VIA TELECONFERENCE FROM SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA TIME:  
11:06 A.M. EDT DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2008

-----  
Copyright (c) 2008 by Federal News Service, Inc., Ste. 500 1000 Vermont Avenue,  
NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA. Federal News Service is a private firm not  
affiliated with the federal government. No portion of this transcript may be  
copied, sold or retransmitted without the written authority of Federal News  
Service, Inc. Copyright is not claimed as to any part of the original work  
prepared by a United States government officer or employee as a part of that  
person's official duties. For information on subscribing to the FNS Internet  
Service, please visit <http://www.fednews.com> or call (202)347-1400  
-----

(Note: Please refer to [www.dod.mil](http://www.dod.mil) for more information.)

CHARLES "JACK" HOLT (chief, New Media Operations, OASD PA): All right.  
This is Jack. Who's joining us now?

MR. MCGAUGH: Scott McGaugh from USS Midway.

MR. HOLT: All right. Mr. McGaugh, thank you very much.

MR. MCGAUGH: My pleasure.

MR. HOLT: We appreciate you being with us here, and I think we've got  
everyone together. Whoop, who else is joining us here?

MR. MCGAUGH: Maybe not.

MR. HOLT: Yeah. (Laughs.) Q Howdy, Jack. It's Grim, Blackfive.

MR. HOLT: All right, Grim. All right. Now we've got everybody  
together.

MR. MCGAUGH: A punctual group.

MR. HOLT: Yeah, for a change. (Laughter.) As long as their day  
hasn't been overcome by events.

We appreciate you being with us here today. We've got with us Mr.  
Scott McGaugh. He is the marketing director for the USS Midway Museum and he's  
also an author with a couple of books under his belt.

Mr. McGaugh, thank you very much for joining us here today.

MR. MCGAUGH: It's a real pleasure. I'm looking forward to the  
conversation.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Anything you want to start us out with? An  
opening statement?

MR. MCGAUGH: No. Well, tell you what, let me just give a real quick  
overview in 30 seconds of the museum and Midway, and then I'm more than happy to  
take the conversation anywhere the roundtable wants to go.

For those of you who may not be familiar, the USS Midway was the longest-serving carrier in U.S. Navy history, at least in the 20th century, from 1945, just missing the war, through the liberation of Kuwait in 1992 -- 1991, decommissioned in 1992 here in San Diego. Literally, it served America from the era Hellcats to Hornets in terms of naval aviation.

We brought it back to San Diego after a 12-year community campaign in 2004 to open as a museum. We're continuing to restore and build out the museum. We're coming up on our fourth anniversary a little north of 3 million visitors. We're the most visited floating ship museum in the country, but we've still got a long ways to go on many levels, both as a museum and as a national icon. So, we'd like to say that Midway is kind of deployed on her last mission as a museum, as an education center, and perhaps most importantly, as a tribute to all those who've served.

MR. HOLT: All right. Thank you very much.

Well, Chuck, you were first online, so why don't you get us started?

Q Good morning. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal.

I've been on the Lexington in Corpus Christi, and they were able to set in quite a respectable number of different aircraft on their deck for demonstration purposes. What kind of aircraft do you have on display?

MR. MCGAUGH: We now have 25 aircraft, dating from a Skywarrior and TBM Avenger of World War II, through the Hornet, the F-18 Hornet. Ultimately our air wing is going to be 31 aircraft. We've got volunteers who are restoring aircraft right now. So it's a wide range. Gosh, nuclear weapons -- nuclear bombers, from A-3 Skywarriors and Vigilantes, to the more mundane COD, C-1 Traders that come aboard. Tomcat from Desert Storm is aboard. We've got an F-9 Panther from the Korean War, an F-9 Cougar from the Korean War. We've pretty well built out the more contemporary elements of the air wing, including helicopters. What we're now working on are the more difficult to obtain, as you might imagine, and restore World War II era, Korean era.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And Will?

Q Hi. I actually have got two questions. Will from Steeljaw Scribe. The first question is, I didn't hear a Hawkeye in there.

MR. MCGAUGH: Oh. E-2C Hawkeye.

Q Good. Okay. Good on you.

MR. MCGAUGH: Good check. (Laughter.) And I tell you, it's one of the more -- you know, for our average civilian, which of course is what most of our visitors are -- 97 percent of our visitors have never been aboard a carrier, or probably walked up close to a Navy aircraft. And the Hawkeye clearly is one of the most popular just because of its unusual configuration.

Q Well, we are a unique breed. (Laughs.)

MR. MCGAUGH: Indeed.

Q The other question. Have you thought about partnering with Big Navy for a possible project here? And here's what I'd like to sort of outline for you and get your thoughts on. MR. MCGAUGH: Sure.

Q Frankly, for a service that has 200-plus years of pretty marvelous history, I think the Navy does a very poor job of getting that history out and embedding it, if you will, into the rank and file. To that end, I'm wondering if you might think about joining up with Big Navy and putting together the beginnings of, say, a new Profiles in Courage, where things like the Midway are highlighted and the people that flew off of her, as a start for a much larger roll-out again of sort of this new Profiles in Courage.

MR. MCGAUGH: Do you mean from an oral history program standpoint?

Q Yeah. From an oral history, something that's in a media form that is readily distributable and accessed by this new generation that's coming on board.

MR. MCGAUGH: We're close in many respects. We have an oral history program. We've just established it with professional studio on board. We are working in concert with the Library of Congress. And for the life of me, I can't recall the name of that program. It's an oral history program that museums get certified by and for.

We are just now beginning to promote that to primarily Midway sailors, but not necessarily Midway sailors. Remember, we're a naval aviation museum, so I don't know that we'd ever go too far into battleships and submarines and other aspects. Our mission is as a naval aviation museum, so we'd probably stay within that arena. As we collect those, we are now from a future generation standpoint beginning to integrate them into some interactive videos on the ship.

And just -- it's funny you asked this. Just this morning we were talking about how we need to take our website -- which is adequate, but not particularly forward-thinking or -looking by any stretch, if only because of limited resources -- but begin to incorporate some of the very things you're talking about to make it much more available. So, using, frankly, YouTube -- I'm kind of getting into the marketing arena now a little bit -- but YouTube and MySpace and looking for a new host for our website so we can, frankly, overhaul our website now that we've been around long enough and we have, frankly, more resources than we did when we first opened.

So, we're looking at those kinds of things. Honestly, it's a year or two down the road. We don't have a webmaster. We're still doing our website with volunteers, and that needs to change with the next budget year here at the museum, and it will change. An expression we've had since the day we opened has been, you know, "crawl, walk, run," whether it's the website, whether it's restoration, whether it's guest services, and so on, but the kinds of things you're talking about is very much the way we want to go, because this is not a museum for you and me, quite frankly. It's for our children and our grandchildren, and we certainly recognize that their orientation is not our orientation.

Q Excellent.

MR. HOLT: All right. And Maggie?

Q Hi. Scott, do you want to tell us about the Medal of Honor recipients you're honoring tomorrow? MR. MCGAUGH: Sure. For the second year now -- this is an annual event on Midway -- we have an annual gala. Last year, the inaugural event was called -- is called the Midway American Patriot Award, MAPA. We had it on the flight deck, a thousand people, black tie, broadcast by NBC into about 15 markets around the country. And we honored Bob Hope -- posthumously, obviously -- for his untiring support for the troops and so on.

As we rolled into this year, an idea developed that really took us a little bit in a different direction, at least for this year. The event is being co-hosted with the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. They have a similar program -- I believe it's the American -- it is the American Spirit Award -- and through a mutual friend, the former governor of California and former mayor of San Diego, Pete Wilson, who serves on their board, the conversation developed into what if we combined them this year and did something very special on the flight deck of Midway. And that is what this year's gala is all about.

What we are doing is we are honoring the surviving World War II Medal of Honor recipients. As you may know, 16 million Americans served during World War II. There were 464 Medal of Honor recipients. I believe there are only 32 that are still with us alive, and six and possibly seven will be here tomorrow night. Sam Donaldson, ABC News, is the MC.

A very special ceremony honoring these folks who will be aboard. A lot of pomp and circumstance, if you will. And it's our way of saying thank you and honoring that generation in a way that we probably won't have much more time to do.

So it's a sellout and we're well into execution now because it's tomorrow night up on the flight deck. And we'll soon begin thinking about next year.

Q So are we holding those names close to the vest, or can you tell us who it will be?

MR. MCGAUGH: Oh! Oh, yeah, absolutely. Are you ready with your pen? Sorry about that. John Finn, F-i-n-n. Jack Lucas, L-u-c-a-s. Hershel Williams. Charles Murray. Walter Ehlers, E-h-l-e-r-s. Van Barfoot, B-a-r-f-o-o-t. And Vernon Baker. And if it were me, I would say, quite honestly, these are the folks who have confirmed attendance and are scheduled to appear. I know of at least one who's flying in this morning, we hope, just from a health standpoint. Sometimes it's a little bit touch and go. But at last report, that was the lineup who had committed to attending.

Q Very good.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Grim.

Q Our audience, of course, includes a lot of military history buffs. Can you tell us a little bit about your exhibit? For example, if you've gone out to see the Yorktown in South Carolina, you know, what would you learn coming out to see the Midway, in terms of technology changes to update a World War II era cruiser to the period of the Gulf War?

MR. MCGAUGH: Well, I'm going to try to keep my answer short. I think the thing that a lot of people come away with more often than not or that

they're amazed by is, a big part of what we talk about is not just the history - the unique history of the USS Midway, nor just the history of naval aviation from World War II through Desert Storm.

But at this point a good portion of the experience -- the museum experience is about life at sea, what it was like for 4,300 men working so that 200 of the 4,500 could fly. That's how many pilots on average were on Midway. What it was like for Midway's crew of 4,500, whose average age was 19, to set a record of 327 days at sea, which still holds for aircraft carriers. We are a naval aviation museum, but we really talk about what makes that possible.

And a key element of that, unlike the other aircraft carrier museums, is we have a self-guided audio tour that's included with every admission, that now will take you to 60 different locations, from one of the engine rooms deep inside the ship all the way up to the bridge, up in the island, and a whole host of others. That self-guided audio tour is narrated by former Midway sailors who lived and worked in each of those spaces. So when you come aboard, you might punch a button near the brig and listen to a man who shared some time in the brig, and who is now in his 80s, from 1946. And the next stop, in an officers wardroom, might be a man in his 40s talking to you about what it was like during Desert Storm at that time in that particular location.

So we don't spend a lot of time in the sense of quoting stats and statistics and power plants and the evolution of technology and the advent of computers and so on, but we really kind of weave that in much more from a personal -- a first-person standpoint by the 225,000 sailors who served aboard.

And to be honest with you, that's what's made Midway, I believe, popular to women. We could have, I suppose, opened a museum with aircraft and power plants and so on, for most guys, and it would have been successful, or we believe so. But to really make it viable for women, as well as the kids, is, we believe, to make it much more personal. So it's the life at sea, the city at sea. It's all the logistics and people involved outside the aircraft carrier of underway replenishment and so on, the humanitarian missions. People are surprised to -- we basically turn a lot of "Top Gun" myths upside down: that less than 10 percent of Midway's life was spent in combat; that 4,300 men worked so 200 could fly; that the average age was 19, and they were cobblers and bakers and butchers and corpsmen and those kinds of things, and not just pilots. That's a big part of the museum. It's a big part of the experience and, I think, from my experience, is something a little bit different than the Intrepid or the Lexington or the Hornet up in Alameda.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Anybody else? Anybody -- somebody joined us late. Okay.

Well, we've got a few more minutes here, so we'd like to continue on. Any other follow-up questions?

Q Yes, it's Chuck again. First of all, the two quick questions. Can you give us the URL of your website? And also, how are you moored? Lexington is fairly well aground, but that's due to hurricane concerns. How is the Midway moored?

MR. MCGAUGH: The museum website is midway. -- [www.midway.org](http://www.midway.org). And information about the books that I've written, if that's what you were referring to, [www.midwaymagic.com](http://www.midwaymagic.com).

To answer your second question, we are not moored on the bottom like the Lexington or as the Intrepid had become in the Hudson River. We float with the tide. Part of our private fundraising -- Midway is here with no tax support whatsoever, tax dollar support. It was all privately raised -- \$8 million. A good portion of that went into rebuilding Navy Pier, a pier here in the heart of San Diego, right at the foot of downtown, where Midway is berthed.

And from an environmental standpoint, we had to build separate mooring platforms at a cost of \$3 million. So technically Midway is actually moored to these mooring platforms right alongside the pier. We're not actually tied up to the pier per se, which is nearly a hundred years old. And out here, for a variety of reasons, we chose -- and the regulators and so on agreed -- that we would float with the tide as opposed to be set on the bottom.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Anybody else? Anything else?

Q This is Will again. I've got one for you.

MR. MCGAUGH: Sure.

Q Okay. You gave us the URL, but what can we, as the vast Navy blogosphere, do for you?

MR. MCGAUGH: Wow. Great question. You know, that's a great question. I wish I had a short, snappy answer for you. I think probably a lot -- you know, I read a lot of them whenever I can, your work. I think just continuing to get young people involved as much as you can in the process and beginning to understand what it takes to serve our country without getting too, you know, sappy about it, frankly.

But I think in today's world it's so difficult -- I think, from a competition standpoint, from a share-of-attention standpoint, the more you can do -- any of us can do to relate to the younger generation -- which sounds corny, but nonetheless -- I think the -- that's where, I think, ultimately the biggest return on our investment, so to speak, can be.

It's something we're always thinking about. It's something we're always talking about. Our self-guided tour, we also have a student and young-person version designed just for them, and our education programs -- I think all of that is vital for, you know, long-term support of the military and the national defense.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right. Okay, anybody else?

All right, well, Mr. McGaugh, thank you very much for joining us.

MR. MCGAUGH: My pleasure.

MR. HOLT: Very interesting stuff. And looking forward to getting out to The Midway next time I get to San Diego.

MR. MCGAUGH: Thanks. And anytime you folks want to get in touch, by e-mail -- if you use the "contact us" form at [midway.org](http://midway.org), that comes straight to my desk.

MR. HOLT: All right. Excellent. Thank you very much, sir.

MR. MCGAUGH: You bet.

MR. HOLT: Thanks for being with us for the Bloggers Roundtable.

MR. MCGAUGH: Take care all. Bye-bye.

MR. HOLT: Thanks.

END.